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COUNTRY Greece

SUBJECT Situation in Greece

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1. "The internal situation shows no improvement, but on the contrary is deteriorating because of the intensification of the political quarrels within the country. The activities of Sophocles Venizelos both in Paris and in Athens have provoked this unfortunate turn in the situation.
2. "I do not see that Venizelos has been moved by patriotism to undertake these activities but only, it appears, by ambition to take over the leadership of the whole Liberal Party. Many persons think that he has been stimulated to do this, however, by the Allied Forces and particularly by Americans.
3. "There is some basis, perhaps, for this belief in the special relations which Venizelos had with the former chief of the American Mission, Mr. Griswold, although from a conversation which I had with my American colleague I found no support for this view.
4. "The articles recently published in the right-wing press to the effect that Venizelos, when in Paris, had been in communication with leftist circles there, particularly with John Sofianopoulos and Blum, may well be true, particularly since the French Embassy in Athens is well disposed toward Venizelos.
5. "In a conversation which I had recently with my French colleague, the latter told me that Sofoulis as Prime Minister of Greece had been unable to carry out his program because he is controlled by the Populists. The French Embassy does not look with favor on the program of the Populists, and for this reason would prefer a government under Venizelos to include more democratic elements. The situation would deteriorate if Napoleon Zervas, Stylianos Gonatas and Tourkavasailis took part in the government. In any case it is believed that the present Parliament will not be able to help the country to emerge from the impasse in which it is found.
6. "I replied to my French colleague that under the present circumstances it is impossible to hold new elections without dissolving Parliament through a dictatorship, and that the King does not favor such a solution. In such

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a case we should have either a dictatorship of the right, probably under Papagos, or one under Nicholas Plastiras, in whom Venizelos is interested and for whom he is working perhaps without realizing it. A dictatorship under Plastiras with the evident collaboration of Sofianopoulos, Alexander Svolos, et cetera, would completely overthrow the present situation, and in such a case we do not know what position the Army would take.

7. "Then the Frenchman said, 'I have information that the people and the soldiers want reconciliation to put an end to this interminable situation.'
8. "Since Stylianos Gonatas comes from the Liberal wing, it would be natural for the completely conservative elements of the Liberal Party to join him. During the recent voting in the Parliament Gonatas voted against the Government, but he disagreed (with others in the Opposition) and did not sign the petition to the King which demanded the overthrow of the Government. This leaves him a door by which to enter the Government.
9. "There is danger that if Sofoulis withdraws from politics the majority of his followers may follow Emmanuel Tsouderos, who is in political opposition to Venizelos.
10. "I have information that Venizelos is not the one who will hold the majority of the Liberal deputies who are following him now merely in order to overthrow the Government for party purposes.
11. "It is said in the press that Athenagoras will pass through Athens on his way to Istanbul and that he will take part in a great religious service. If he does so, it will give an excuse to those who wish to diminish the value of the Oecumenical Patriarchate. I had a talk on this subject with the Russian Charge d'Affaires here, and he said to me, 'While you Turks so far have not become involved in the Patriarchal elections, in the present case not only your press but also the willingness of your Government to grant him a Turkish passport indicates that you are subservient to the wishes of the Americans. For Greece such an appointment has a special significance, because he represents the faction of the reactionaries. You represented Maximos as sicker than he was, because he was regarded as our friend, and when they took him to Athens recently, on the pretext of treating him, they sought principally to compel him to resign. In any case for us Russians the continuity of the tradition of the Oecumenical Patriarchate is ended.'
12. "I replied to him that not only the Serbian Patriarch but also the Patriarch of Antioch had congratulated him on his election.
13. "The Russian then said, 'The first obeyed the command of Tito in order to prove that he does not agree with us even there. As for the second, who knows what aims he is concealing?'
14. "The declaration of our representative to the United Nations that he agreed with Mr. Evatt regarding a compromise solution of the Greek question did not make a good impression on public opinion here. No matter with whom I discuss this subject I tell them that the Greeks should not be displeased because our representative played a little diplomatic game so that we should not appear unreconcilable; since in the end all the proposals for compromise will be rejected, our representative will support a solution favorable to Greece."

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